

THE MAKING OF POTTERY ✓

SYNOPSIS OF FILM

1. Modeling Clay on Potter's Wheel.
2. Finishing a Vase on the Lathe.
3. Casting Liquid Clay in Plaster of Paris Molds.
4. Pressing: Forcing the Clay by Hand into a Revolving Mold.
5. Decorating with Colored Clay. The Artist at Work with Brush and Palette.
6. Glazing Ware before Firing in the Kiln.
7. Vases for the Kiln. Vase Placed in Clay Boxes (Saggars) and Carried on Workmen's Heads to the Kilns.
8. View of Kiln Showing Racks.

THE MAKING OF POTTERY

THE making of pottery is one of the oldest arts practiced by man. This is evidenced by discoveries recently made in Mexico and other parts of North America as well as in Asia Minor.

Modern man has improved but little on the art as it was known centuries ago. Wherever the proper kind of clay is found and transportation facilities are good and cheap, there potteries have sprung up, at which various kinds of utensils are made.

The views shown on this film were taken in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The clay undergoes several processes prior to those shown on the film. In the first process pictured, it is "wedged," or kneaded to make it soft and workable. A ball of clay is then placed upon the potter's wheel, which is often operated by foot as is the old familiar grindstone, and the entire top is revolved. Then the moist clay is "spun" by the potter, who uses his hands to change it to the desired shape. It is cut from the wheel by a thin wire, as shown, and then the vase, or other object, may be turned exactly as wood is turned on a lathe.

When the articles are to be of a definite design and of uniform size, they are cast in a plaster of Paris mold. The liquid clay is poured into the mold, which absorbs the water and leaves them dry and easy to handle.

By another method that is also shown, a small mass of prepared, plastic clay is put into the mold and pressed firmly into it just as butter prints are formed. The finishing tool in this case is a wet sponge which, under hand

pressure, forces the clay evenly into every part of the mold and smoothly finishes the outside of the object.

Many of the vases are simply dipped into coloring material to give a uniform shade of green, or brown, or some other color, but the more expensive kinds are decorated by hand with clay of different colors, and our film shows the artist at work. The trees on the vase are seen growing under his brush. These decorators are artists and receive high wages.

To give the bright, shiny surface, such as ordinary dinnerware has, the articles are glazed or "glassed" by dipping them into a liquid, which may be prepared from many materials, and then "firing" them for a day or longer. Many articles require several firings, since some processes in the finish must be fired before the next can be attempted.

The next scene shows us two workmen filling clay boxes, called "saggars," with articles which are to be fired. The workmen place the "saggars" on their flat caps and carry them into the kilnroom, which now appears on the screen.

The kilns are immense clay stoves, shaped like beehives. The "saggars" are placed in these on racks, or grates, and when they are filled, the doors are sealed and fires are lighted below. Charcoal, wood, gas, oil, or electricity may be used for firing, but for the larger kilns coal is generally used. After twenty-four hours or more, the articles are withdrawn from the kiln. In spite of the care used, many of them are worthless. Some are broken, others have poor glazing, and on others the decorations do not fire well. Such uncertainty and loss add expense to the product.

The processes from the time when the clay appears on the potter's wheel until it reaches its finished state require about six weeks.

QUESTIONS, TOPICS, SUGGESTIONS

1. What is kaolin?
2. What objects of everyday life are made of clay?
3. Why do some bricks appear red, others yellow, and others of a mottled red and blue?
4. What properties has clay that makes it suitable for the lining of stoves, chimneys, etc.?
5. What famous ware is made in England? In France?
6. What other countries produce dinner ware?
7. What is the difference between ordinary dinner ware and porcelain?
8. Draw representations of earthen vases that you have at home. Look for manufacturer's name on bottom.
9. Look up meaning of "decalcomania." For what ware is it most extensively used?
10. Bring in pictures of Indian pottery. Notice characteristics.
11. Tell what you can of the "mound builders."

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